

Bakersfield couple stuck in Mexico after accident leaves husband with brain injury



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Brian Hodges in a coma after crashing into a cliff while ziplining in Cabo San Lucas

VIDEO BY KERO

BAKERSFEILD, Calif. - A ziplining accident has turned a Bakersfield couple's dream vacation into a nightmare. The husband is in the hospital with a traumatic brain injury and tangled in a sea of insurance red tape.

Brian and Shimeaka Hodges have been together for nearly 20 years.

"Loving, loving, loving...They're jokesters together and they just love each other, it's awesome to see," said family friend Cecilia Pulido.

To celebrate Shimeaka's birthday, they decided to go on a couple's vacation to Cabo San Lucas with friends Calvin and Enjoli Black. After a few days of relaxing on the beach, however, the couples decided it was time for some adventure at Wild Canyon Ziplines, claiming to be the safest excursion in Cabo.

"I can see he's 20 feet away from this mountain and he's close. Way too close," said Black.

Then every traveler's nightmare, the wind turned Brian's body and he went crashing into a cliff at nearly 40 miles per hour.

"I'm running down the ramp to grab him and we're pulling him in, out of the harness, and we're screaming at him like 'Brian say something, talk to me,' and Shimeaka's praying and calling for her husband," he said.

The accident left Brian in a coma, leaving him with traumatic brain injury, broken ribs and neck, and fractured vertebrae, among other injuries.

But the news gets worse. The hospital in Mexico didn't accept the Hodge's health insurance because they didn't have international coverage, forcing Shimeaka to pay \$50,000 out of pocket for his surgery and hospital bills.

Kern Travel Service travel agent Gary Jaussaud says the couple would not have found themselves in this mess if they had purchased travel insurance.

"A lot of people don't know when they leave the country, their personal insurance doesn't cover them," said Jaussaud. He also advises to go through hotels for excursions to ensure the best quality companies.

"Don't go off to some vendor and think it's going to be fine. They have to understand they're taking a risk," he told 23ABC.

The Hodges are now stuck in Mexico because the injury is so severe he can't be airlifted. It will be three weeks before they will be able to even leave Mexico.

The couple is in desperate need of financial help. You can help fund Brian and Shimeaka Hodges through their hospital stay

HERE: <http://www.gofundme.com/Brian--Meaka-Hodges-Fund>

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